



Income-based fares

Public Engagement Report

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Strategic Communications and Engagement
October 2019



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Public Engagement Overview

Metro conducted a robust stakeholder process and additional public engagement to guide the development of the income-based approach to fares that would provide no or very low cost access to transit to residents earning less than 138% of the federal poverty level.

Metro convened a Stakeholder Advisory Group of 31 organizations representing a variety of populations, including human service agencies, community members, and community-based organizations who represent target populations such as immigrants and refugees, college students, affordable housing residents, and people with disabilities. This group was the primary driver and guidance for the program development.

In addition to the Stakeholder Advisory Group, Metro contracted with six community-based organizations representing those most disproportionately affected by poverty to conduct engagement with community members who would potentially qualify for this program. Metro also conducted an online survey with an option for respondents to self-identify as being at less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level. This ensured that Metro could center the experience and input of no to very low income customers in the decision making process.

The stakeholder advisory group met four times from March 2019 to August 2019 and were the lead source of input for program development.

Who helped shape the recommended program?

- Stakeholder advisory group
- Customer engagement:
 - Income-eligible customers from historically underrepresented populations including Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, immigrants, and refugees, including those with disabilities – through community-based organizations contracts
 - Online customer survey from self-identified, potentially income-eligible customers

Engagement Goals

- Advance equitable decision-making by engaging and involving transit-dependent and traditionally underserved populations in shaping policies and programs designed to improve their access to transit.
- Empower the providers, stakeholders, and people who will benefit from this program to shape it to best serve them.
- Cultivate a robust relationship between community stakeholders who represent low-income riders and Metro.

Desired Outcomes of Engagement

- Create a program that is centered on the needs of the target population
- Develop strong relationships with community stakeholders working with and representing low-income riders that extend beyond the income-based fares program.

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Metro convened a Stakeholder Advisory Group to provide input and expertise as Metro designed an income-based fare option for residents who cannot afford the current reduced fare programs. In developing this list, Metro created the initial list from organizations that had previously participated in other fares-related engagement efforts. Metro then solicited input from County Councilmembers and their staffers, the Office of Equity and Social Justice, and the King County Executive about which groups and individuals to include in this process.

The Advisory Group included human service agencies, community members, and community-based organizations who represent target populations such as immigrants and refugees, college students, affordable housing residents, and people with disabilities. The full list of stakeholders is in Appendix B. Some stakeholders were unable to participate through the whole process but were kept on the email list and were invited to give feedback outside of the workshops. Metro staff met with several stakeholders outside of the workshops to get their feedback if they were unable to attend.

Engagement consultants

Metro contracted with two facilitation and equity and social justice consultants, Sarah Tran and Wendy Watanabe, in order to provide strategic advice on inclusive engagement, facilitation and equity and social justice for the stakeholder workshops. Tran and Watanabe provided valuable strategic advice and input/review of the workshops' design, agendas and materials as well as crucial debrief meetings after each workshop to determine key themes, and next steps for options development.

Stakeholder engagement process

The stakeholders met four times in 2019 (March, April, June, and August) to guide and refine the proposed program design, weigh in on options, and indicate their level of support for the final recommended program. The group was a mix of stakeholders who have been frequently engaged in previous efforts around transit and fares, while others were entirely new to Metro's engagement processes and programs/fares.

Staff from King County (Metro, County Council, Executive's Office, Public Health, Community and Human Services), other jurisdictions (City of Seattle), and transit agencies (Sound Transit) were invited to attend and observe the Stakeholder Advisory Workgroup in order to increase transparency and hear directly from stakeholders.

Over the course of four workshops, the group provided their input and expertise on the following:

- Barriers to accessing transit for low-income individuals including their lived experience and challenges
- Existing Metro policies and objectives
- Funding and partnership opportunities with customers, social service agencies, other transit agencies, and community-based organizations
- Priority program design principles
- Potential program options with tradeoffs, including a free-to-user product to residents under 138% of the federal poverty level
- Pricing, eligibility, and verification through partner agencies
- Program evaluation
- Long-term vision for making transit more affordable for those with the highest needs (and lowest incomes)

Workshop 1: Defining the problem of affordability; reaching the no to very low income population

The stakeholders received an overview of the scope of the proviso, the rationale for pursuing an income-based approach to fares, overall program goals, and information about Metro's current reduced fare offerings in the context of affordability in King County. Stakeholders offered feedback on:

- Barriers facing low-income customers in King County
- Best ways for reaching customers who may or may not already know about existing reduced fare options
- How to reach people who cannot afford the current reduced fare options

Stakeholders spent time discussing the needs of the target population, which are diverse depending on their lived experience. They reported that all in this population struggle with the negative effects of not having access to transit. The systems in place are centered on white, able, and resourced people, leaving those in this income range to struggle with barriers ranging from language, literacy, mental health, being undocumented, displacement, gentrification, lack of awareness of reduced fare options, inaccessibility of transit service for those with disabilities, racism from other customers and operators, and nontraditional or variable work schedules.

Stakeholders felt strongly that the income-based fare program should be centered on those most in need.

Stakeholders prioritized design principles for the program:

1. Center the needs of customers for whom the current fares are unaffordable
2. Include adequate resources of education and promotion efforts that effectively reach the target population

3. Be possible to administer for partners who would be doing verification and enrollment
4. Have a manageable transition for customers between current fare products and the new program
5. Not stigmatize or cause undue burden on customers
6. Be integrated with the ORCA system

Workshop 2: Feedback on program concepts

Metro presented four broad program concepts based on the design principles heard in the first workshop and the feedback given about why existing programs were unaffordable or not reaching their target populations. Metro identified several advantages and challenges with each concept, and stakeholders asked clarifying questions. Stakeholders then provided input on the concepts, summarized below.

1. Metro fully subsidizes a free monthly pass to participants of programs serving the lowest-income and no-income populations [0-50% of the FPL]
 - a. Stakeholder feedback:
 - i. Leverage connections between customers and providers as they enroll or receive other services.
 - ii. Consider the needs of people with disabilities, limited English proficiency.
 - iii. Safety/fraud – high value item could lead to robberies.
2. Metro offers a partial subsidy of ORCA passes for purchase by human service agencies [0-138% of the FPL]
 - a. Stakeholder feedback:
 - i. Agencies may not have capacity or budget to purchase products for their clients and administer the program, particularly those serving the most vulnerable.
 - ii. Scarcity and availability are concerns. This concept is most similar to the Human Service Ticket Program, and the paper tickets are always in demand.
 - iii. Agencies have concerns and questions about implementation.
3. Metro partially subsidizes passes and sells them directly to eligible customers who enroll in the program. Due to limitations in the current ORCA system, purchase locations would be limited to Metro offices or ORCA To-Go locations]
 - a. Stakeholder feedback:
 - i. Limiting it to Metro offices only is too difficult to access [geography and hours are too limited].
 - ii. A partial subsidy does not serve the highest need [meet the need for people with no income].
4. Metro lowers the LIFT fare for the entire LIFT population [Metro is unable to lower the LIFT fare for a portion of the population until Next Generation ORCA,

so a lowering of the fare would need to be done for the entire LIFT passenger type]

- a. Doesn't serve the highest need or address needs of people with no income

Overall feedback:

- Stakeholders did not like any of them as standalone options – they would prefer to see a combination of options (especially Option 1 and Option 4 together).

Stakeholders then discussed several key questions in small groups and generated ideas on how to do eligibility and verification for the program. The feedback is summarized below from those conversations.

Focus resources on most in need

- Strong support for a bigger benefit for fewer people [free-to-user], rather than a smaller benefit for a larger population
- Customers with low incomes are more reliant on transit, consistently report that they would ride more if the fare was less, and that human service tickets are limited and hard to access

Build capacity and compensate agencies/organizations for administering program

- Divided on the issue of agency copay; an agency copayment for the transit product would allow Metro to serve more people. However, many agencies, especially those serving the most vulnerable, don't have staff capacity, resources, or funds available to take on this extra body of work
- Integrating and leveraging existing human service agency partners for verification, enrollment, and distribution is better for the customer than requiring that they come to Metro
- Community-based organizations (CBOs) serving immigrants, undocumented immigrants, and refugees should also participate; many people don't feel comfortable or safe giving income eligibility information to organizations outside of trusted CBOs (i.e. Open Doors for Multicultural Families, Casa Latina)

Regional integration: critical for customer experience

- From customer engagement, nearly every low-income rider uses Metro, most also use Sound Transit
- A Metro-only pass could be confusing, result in increased fare evasion on other transit systems and require customers to carry multiple cards – especially for those with disabilities, limited English, etc.
- Risk for increased fare violations on other transit agencies if customers don't understand that the pass is not valid on their services.
- However, a Metro-only product is still greatly preferred over nothing

Price isn't the only concern – fast and frequent service is just as important

- There's a lack of awareness and understanding about reduced fares, where/how to load money; over half of people eligible for LIFT pay the full fare instead of not paying the proper fare⁵
- Customers place high value on service and safety, some low-income customers rank them above fare discounts

Outreach and education – reach people where they are, leverage relationships with trusted CBOs, make it easier to learn about reduced fare programs

- Education and outreach will be very important – if people don't understand how the pass works, they may throw it away, not use it properly, or be cited by other transit agencies
- There's an overall lack of awareness and knowledge about reduced fares and ORCA
- It will be important for Metro ensure language access and work with CBOs serving specific racial/ethnic groups to raise awareness
- Metro reach people where they are: libraries, community colleges, schools, and to leverage existing CBOs, human service agencies, and other partners for marketing and outreach
- Human service agencies are integral for outreach and enrollment and Metro must pay partners for their time

Workshop 3: Customer engagement findings, concept development (universal vs. targeted approaches)

In this workshop, Metro reported out the findings from the customer engagement through the online survey and community conversations through contracts with six community-based organizations.

Metro also updated the stakeholders on analysis done on the preferred concepts from the second meeting. Metro shared the reasoning for taking a targeted approach to the problem of affordability for the no to very low-income population. This means determining where needs are greatest in accordance with the feedback we gathered from community-based organizations, the online survey, and the stakeholders.

Stakeholders learned about Metro's fiscal policies and gave feedback on what Metro should continue to collectively champion in the coming months. Stakeholders strongly expressed a desire for regional integration. At the end of the meeting, the hope was to conclude with a shared path forward based on what the group supported. However, it was determined that due to the complexity of the information presented, it was important to meet one more time.

Workshop 4: Program proposal feedback and a long-term vision for affordable access to transit and mobility

In the final workshop, Metro presented a program proposal based around a phased approach to start where the needs are the greatest. The proposal presented was the same as the proposal in this report. Stakeholders then discussed the pros and cons of the proposal, who is and is not served by the proposal, and how to reach those who are not being served by it on a small scale.

The group was largely supportive of the proposal and the plan to do a robust program evaluation. Stakeholders expressed support for the proposal because of the product's integration with other reduced fare programs, and the annual pass being less burdensome for the customer and human service agencies who would be doing enrollment. Stakeholders were supportive of the program's connection with human service agencies, and that the program is in the ORCA system so customers could use the same card for other transit agencies.

Stakeholders asked Metro to continue to work on making Metro's services more accessible for people with disabilities. They also asked about whether the program would include Access Paratransit users, and where the funding would come from for this program. They were also concerned about communicating how to use the product to customers because it is only available on Metro; customers riding on other transit services would need to pay either a LIFT rate or RRFP rate.

Stakeholders brought up several creative ways to promote the program including partnering with fare enforcement and at non-participating agencies. They also asked several important questions for the project team and Council to consider around the capability of the service to handle additional new riders, how the program will reach those who are not enrolled in case managed programs and how the program can include innovative mobility services.

Staff asked the group how they would like to be involved moving forward. Stakeholders marked their preferences on their evaluation forms, which were turned in at the end of the meeting or distributed online. A third of participants expressed interest in learning more and potentially participating in the first round of implementation. Several other participants expressed a desire to collaborate with Metro on marketing and outreach for improving the way that people can find the right fare program for them.

During the second half of the meeting, Metro staff wanted to ensure that the work this group has done around affordability will be utilized in Metro's plans and policies moving forward. Metro staff collaborated with the stakeholders on a vision of what affordable access to transit and mobility will look like in the long-term. A draft was pre-populated with feedback from the three previous workshops, customer engagement through the online survey and community-based organizations, and from staff. Metro will use this document as the strategic vision and guidance as it relates to affordability when

updating Metro's policy documents in line with the Mobility Framework (to begin at the end of 2019 through summer 2020).

Below is a short summary of the vision including strategies and indicators of success generated by the stakeholders.

Draft vision

All King County residents, including low-income, people with disabilities, communities of color, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQIA+, have affordable, integrated, accessible, equitable transportation options to improve their economic, health, and social outcomes and opportunities.

Draft goal areas

- Outreach, education, and marketing
- Cost and Income
- Changes/improvements to existing reduced fare programs
- Regional integration
- Partnerships
- Others

Goal area: Outreach, education, and marketing

- Language barriers, age, geography and/or disabilities are not barriers for accessing transit or paying the right fare
- People can easily find out what fare they should be paying and what mobility options are available to them, in their own communities
- Community-based organizations are hubs for information about mobility options for their communities

Goal area: Partnerships

- Integrate subsidized transit benefits into other social service programs
- Trusted CBOs and social service agencies:
- Have strong partnerships with Metro
- Are trained on transit options and services on an ongoing basis
- Educate customers about transit options and fares
- Help Metro determine eligibility
- Help customers identify and enroll in the best fare program for their needs
- Flexibility for customers who aren't involved with agencies
- Improved coordinated transit services aligned with new mobility options
- One King County – increase synergy and coordination between King County departments and other transit agencies across departments, transit agencies, and efforts

Goal area: Cost and income

- More flexibility and ways to pay fares and/or reload ORCA cards
- View transit as an essential need, funding for it is built into services and programs
- Find sustainable funding sources for subsidized transit benefits
- Sliding scale fares
- At planned fare increases, use as an opportunity to further our affordability goals

Goal area: Changes/improvements to existing reduced fare programs such as ORCA LIFT, Regional Reduced Fare Permit, and Youth.

- Address affordability for those at benefit/subsidy cliffs (e.g. ensure that transit is still affordable for those just above the LIFT threshold of 200% of federal poverty level)
- Center fare payment options, distribution, and products on people's needs
- Make it easy to understand what fare options are best for the customer
- Make it easier for families to afford and use transit
- Longer LIFT eligibility period (currently must renew every 2 years)

Goal area: Regional integration

- Seamless customer experience between all transit systems using ORCA
- Includes non-profit and other services
- Create joint-board to centralize program with other public transportation enterprises
- Fare capping in Next Generation ORCA
- Same fare structure across agencies

Goal area: Other

- Metro and Council should continue working for better and equal access to transit for all
- Door to door support for those who need it
- Better marketing for letting customers know about their rights

Indicators of success:

- All vehicles are physically accessible
- All geographies have equal access (route, time, etc.)
- All riders know all transit options/programs available
- Increased language and literacy access
- Integrate transit providers to provide similar accessible services
- Elected officials (including King County Council) understand the physical experience of riding transit on different transit systems.

Public Feedback Summary

In addition to the stakeholder process, Metro worked with community-based organizations and conducted a customer survey to solicit additional input from community members in the 0-138% of the FPL income range.

Customer engagement through community-based organizations

Metro contracted with six community-based organizations (CBOs) to engage potentially eligible community members in providing input on needs, barriers, and options being considered. Metro selected organizations that represented populations¹ who have not recently been engaged with Metro and work with populations that are most disproportionately impacted by poverty, including Native Americans/Alaska Natives, African Americans, immigrants, refugees, people with limited-English proficiency and/or disabilities and undocumented immigrants. The organizations that Metro contracted with were Byrd Barr Place, Casa Latina, Chief Seattle Club, Mother Africa, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, and Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle. Organizations gathered input from participants in effective, culturally sensitive ways, and documented their findings to Metro. By doing two rounds of engagement, Metro was able to talk to the same participants twice to show them how their feedback was used in the program development and decision-making.

Round one feedback:

CBOs chose a method of engagement suited to their mission and population – this varied from community conversations, one on one interviews, and facilitated focus groups in language.

Participants: 118

Demographics: All participants had incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty line, and 14% of respondents that reported their income earn less than \$1,000 annually. A third of respondents had permanent housing that they were renting, but a significant number (about 14%) had no permanent housing. Nearly all participants except for two identified as people of color. 35% identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, 26% as Black or African American, 12% as Hispanic or Latino/a, and another 12% as Middle Eastern/North African. Slightly more men gave responses than women (no one self-identified as trans or non-binary), and the largest age group to respond was between 51-60 years old. The primary languages spoken were English, Spanish, Arabic, French,

¹ Their work was not statistically valid customer research and not a statistically valid representation of Metro ridership or King County constituents as a whole. CBOs reached 118 participants in the first round of engagement and 73 of the same participants in the second round of engagement.

and Swahili as well as several native languages like Lakota and Navajo. 37 percent of participants identified as having a disability. Of those who gave a zip code, 32 percent of participants lived in south King County in cities like Auburn, Covington, Kent, and Tukwila. 62 percent lived within the Seattle city limits.

Key findings:

In the first round of engagement, Metro aimed to answer the following questions:

- Who finds the fares unaffordable? How does the fare impact the participant's use of transit?
- What are the most convenient places and ways to access information and fare products?
- How important is lowering the fare itself, relative to other types of improvements (i.e. more frequent service, reliability, etc.)?

What Metro learned about travel needs and barriers:

- **Nearly all participants use Metro services, and more than half also use Sound Transit** (light rail and express buses). Between 10-15% take the Water Taxi, State Ferries, or transit service in other counties.
- **More than half take Metro multiple times a day and use it for most of the travel needs.** Major barriers included:
 - Lack of weekend service
 - Multiple transfers
 - Transfer window is too short
 - Can't afford the fare
 - Bus takes too long
 - Not enough service in their area
 - Difficult to travel with children (also more expensive)
 - Having a disability makes it difficult to use transit
- Customers used Metro for a variety of travel needs including medical appointments, employment, and school.

What Metro heard regarding affordability:

- **Over half of the participants said the fare always/sometimes prevents them from riding transit.** Many rely on cash or paper tickets. Some of the barriers included:
 - Difficulty in getting to their jobs or appointments without a fare in the first place
 - Difficulty reloading value on ORCA cards

- Negotiating with operators or taking a risk and riding without the fare, which leads to negative fare enforcement experiences (especially around racial profiling)
- While many participants are aware of LIFT, RRFP, youth fares, the application process is still confusing. Many agencies do not have enough paper tickets. Participants prefer to have help from trusted CBOs serving their community to help them through the process.
- Nearly 70% could afford to pay anywhere between \$10-35 a month for a monthly pass, but emphasized that there are still people who cannot afford to pay anything who should receive a free pass. Other comments included:
 - Income often varies month to month (i.e. seasonal workers)
 - Families should have a better discount.

If participants received a free Metro-only pass:

- Almost everyone would use it. Some said they would still use it, even if they had to pay on other systems because of how often they use Metro. Reasons they would not use it include:
 - Still too expensive on other transit systems
 - Not enough service in their area

Best ways to reach customers [ranked in order of the results]

Enrollment/verification: Social service agencies were preferred because participants trust the organizations to help them navigate the application process and with their information.

1. Social Service agencies (especially organizations serving a specific community like Iraqi Community Center and Chief Seattle Club)
2. Libraries
3. Clinics/medical appointments
4. Metro office
5. Online
6. Food Banks
7. Churches/mosques/temples

Easiest way to get information about reduced fares or discounts:

1. Social Service agencies
2. CBOs
3. Media (TV/radio)
4. On the bus or at bus stops
5. Shelters/day centers
6. Schools

Ranking the most important priorities when it comes to transit:

1. Being able to get to my destination more quickly
2. Service more often/frequent
3. Stop locations more convenient
4. Lower fares
5. Others: Safety, earlier/later service, ability to use other services, fewer transfers

Round two feedback:

Metro engaged with the same six organizations to speak with the same community members that they spoke with previously in round one. The CBOs gave participants an update about how Metro used their feedback from the first round to shape the program development. The questions asked in this round of engagement aimed to understand how these customers would use a subsidized Metro-only product and what barriers or complications still exist for them. Again, CBOs chose a method of engagement suited to their mission and population – this varied from community conversations, one on one interviews, and facilitated focus groups in language.

Participants: 73 [primarily the same people from the first round]

Key themes:

Regional integration is critical. 75% of participants said it was critical for the product to be free on all transit systems. Reasons included:

- Less Metro service available in south King County and other places where people with low-incomes are being displaced. This means they are more reliant on other transit systems like Sound Transit to get to their destinations.
- A third of participants said they had difficulty knowing how to ride and pay for other transit systems.
- People could access more employment opportunities if they are not worrying about how to get around.

Even with a fully subsidized product, participants ranked the following barriers:

1. Can't afford the fare for other transit systems
2. Understanding how to use and pay on the other transit systems is a challenge, especially for families, people with disabilities and limited English proficiency
3. Limited knowledge of how and where to load additional value on their ORCA card

Families still need more affordable access to transit. Some have children with disabilities or have disabilities themselves, language barriers and cultural barriers, which makes transit a difficult option.

Customers had major equity concerns about who would receive a fully subsidized Metro pass if the income-based fare program was limited by quantity or product type (e.g. unlimited pass or set number of rides per month). Reasons included:

- The Latinx/Hispanic group said they thought that their population would not rank as highly in priority. They said people experiencing homelessness and/or with disabilities would more likely to be seen as a higher priority to receive a fully subsidized Metro pass.
 - Some worried that they would not be able to get a pass in time before a “cap” was reached; they preferred everyone get some sort of limited benefit (like a few rides per month), if there were not enough passes to go around.
- Over half of the participants said they would use the pass if it had a limited number of Metro-only rides, but that they still would not be able to pay for more trips.
 - This reinforces what we heard in the first round –even with a free pass or limited number of rides on Metro, people would still not be able to afford transit if they had to pay on other transit systems. Providing an unlimited transit pass (albeit Metro-only) is still highly useful to this population.
- Usage of the Seattle Streetcar:
 - Only organizations based in Seattle had participants who occasionally used the Seattle Streetcar (such as Casa Latina and Byrd Barr Place).

When asked if they knew how to load money onto an ORCA card, several participants answered yes. Most answered no and gave the following reasons:

1. No, it's not convenient
2. No, I don't know where to load it
3. No, I know how to load value but can't afford it
4. No, I don't know how to load value

Additional comments included wanting more flexibility for loading value including on a mobile device or at libraries. This resonates with the previous findings in round one.

When asked for the most convenient ways to re-verify income eligibility, participants ranked the following methods:

1. Phone call
2. Online
3. In person
4. Text

Spanish speakers preferred to do the re-verification in person so that they could have a Spanish speaker, but others said that an online option would be more convenient and save an extra trip.

Customer survey of those at or below 138% of the FPL

In order to hear from more members of the public, Metro distributed an online survey to the stakeholder advisory group, through an email alert to Metro routes designated as “low-income”¹, Metro’s fare violation program,² and social service agencies. The survey was primarily administered online through Public Input, a public engagement platform in English and Spanish. Paper copies of the survey were available upon request to organizations to administer to their clients in English and Spanish. The survey was open between May 10 and June 10. The survey asked similar questions to the CBO engagement. The survey included questions to determine income levels based on household in order to filter down to those who self-identified incomes between 0-138% of the FPL.

Who Metro heard from:

Total responses: 1,263

Customers reporting incomes between 0-138% of federal poverty: 299 respondents

Paper surveys from social service agencies: 55

Demographics for those reporting incomes between 0-138% of federal poverty:

More than half the respondents identified as white, and 13 percent identified as Asian American. Less than 10 percent identified either African-American, multi-racial or Latino/Latina/Latinx and less than 5 percent as American Indian/Alaska Native. 77% live in permanent housing while a remaining 16 percent are currently unhoused or other circumstances. 62% of respondents were women, 31 percent were men and 4 percent identified as non-binary. 48% identified as having some type of disability (mobility, cognitive, vision, hearing or other).

Comparison of demographics to the King County population from 0-138% FPL respondents:

The demographics of the 0-138% survey are relatively close to that of the King County 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data. Around 53% of King County residents identify as white, which means they are overrepresented in this survey by about 11%. Latino/Latina/Latinx and Asian populations are also underrepresented in this survey by about 11 percent and 8 percent, respectively. Women are also slightly overrepresented in this sample with 62 percent in the survey compared to 54% countywide. People with disabilities are represented adequately in this survey with nearly 48% of those 0-138% FPL identify as having a disability compared to 20% of residents countywide.

What Metro heard:

See results from those who self-identified as having an income at or below 138% of the FPL: <https://publicinput.com/Report/iejascdlugs>

What Metro learned about travel needs, barriers and affordability for everyone who self-identified having incomes between 0-138% of federal poverty:

- Nearly all participants take Metro and over half take Sound Transit light rail. 35% use Sound Transit buses and 30% take Washington State Ferries.
- About 50% use Metro multiple times a day, and 24% use Metro 3 to 6 days a week.
- The majority of participants (71%) use Metro for most or all of their transportation needs.
- 38% use RRFP, 26% pay the full fare of \$2.75 and 25% pay LIFT (\$1.50)
- More than half (57%) paid their fare with an ORCA card, but loading value and getting the original card was difficult. 30% paid cash and the rest used paper tickets, did not pay, or other methods.
- Just over half the participants (52%) say the fares are somewhat not affordable or not at all affordable.
- Awareness of reduced fare programs is very high for LIFT and RRFP (70-75%), but enrollment is still a barrier. In some cases, paper tickets were still more useful but agencies often do not have enough tickets to meet the demand.
- Cost sometimes or often prevented more than half (54%) of respondents from riding Metro. Reasons included:
 - Can't afford the fare
 - Transfer windows are too long in areas with infrequent service
 - Some walk to their destination due to the cost or to avoid fare enforcement
- 54% can pay between \$10-35 a month for a monthly pass

Best way to purchase or reload bus passes [in order of the most responses]

1. Grocery store or convenience store
2. Ticket vending machine at a light rail station
3. Mobile product on smartphone
4. Community Center or library
5. Metro office
6. Community-based organizations

Easiest way to get information about reduced fares [in order of the most responses]

1. Online
2. Social service agencies
3. TV/radio
4. Community-based organizations
5. Community newspapers

Rank the most important priorities when it comes to transit [participants asked to rank the top 3]

1. Lower fares
2. Being able to get to my destination more quickly
3. Service/buses that come more often/more frequently
4. Reducing number of transfers
5. Improved safety on board the bus and at stops

Additional Outreach & Communications

Along with the Stakeholder Advisory Workgroup and outreach to potential customers, Metro will conduct ongoing outreach and communication to other regional and local groups and decision makers. These efforts include:

- A website where details about the process, timeline, and outcomes make the design of the approach and decision making transparent.
- Updates to elected officials and decision makers about the process and learnings.
- Briefings to regional and local groups as requested. These groups may include, but are not limited to:
 - KC Transit Advisory Commission
 - King County Mobility Coalition
 - King County Regional Transit Committee
 - Seattle Transit Advisory Board